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Gulf Coast!**

**4 Walking Tours of  
Towns on the Gulf Coast  
of Florida**

# A Walking Tour of Fort Myers, Florida

## from **walkthetown.com**

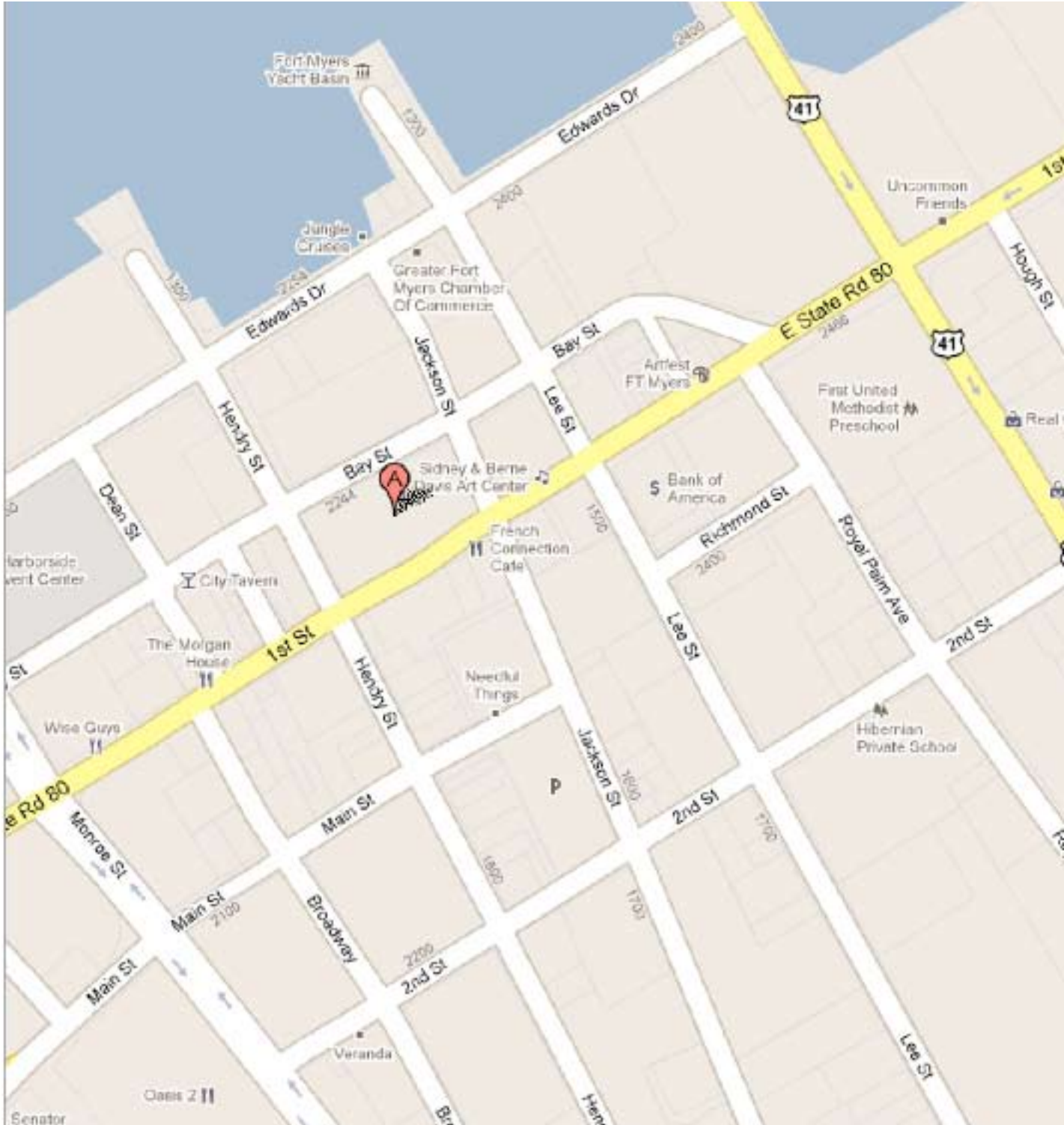
The case can be made that if not for grass Fort Myers would not be the vibrant city it is today. In 1885, when the population was about 349, Thomas Alva Edison came to town on a hunt for the ideal filament for his incandescent light bulb. He believed the answer might be in the bamboo that grew in abundance along the Caloosahatchee River. He was wrong but he fell in love with the little hamlet and bought property for a winter retreat he called Seminole Lodge. He would be at least a part-time resident for the next 45 years. His friend Henry Ford would move in next door.

While in Fort Myers Edison set up a botanical laboratory to search for a way to make synthetic rubber. It is said he conducted over 500,000 tests on a different plants and trees, eventually settling on the weed Goldenrod to produce a latex. They were never able to produce rubber on a commercial scale, however, and the laboratory would be shut down after Edison's death. But Edison's botanical legacy continues in Fort Myers. In the 1800s he began planting rows of magnificent Royal Palms on the road near his home, giving Fort Myers its nickname today - "City of Palms."

Fort Myers itself was named for Colonel Abraham C. Myers who never visited the place. The fort was one of many constructed along the Caloosahatchee River as a base of operations against the Seminole Indians in the 1830s. It was Fort Havrie then and it wasn't particularly important until a hurricane blew away forts closer to the coast. The fort was abandoned for awhile and rebuilt in 1850 when hostilities flared again with the Seminoles. This time it was named Fort Myers for the man who was preparing to marry the daughter of commanding General David E. Twiggs.

The fort was abandoned after the Seminole Wars ended in 1856 but was re-commissioned with Union troops during the Civil War. After 1865 it was abandoned again and this time there would be nothing for troops to come back to as settlers trickling into the area helped themselves to the pine beams, windows, flooring and whatever else they could cart away.

The federal government would return to the site one more time, however, to build the grandest building in downtown Fort Myers on the site of the old fort and that is where we will start our walking tour...



**1. Whitehurst Federal Building (Sidney and Berne Davis Art Center)**  
**2301 1st Street**



This building was lauded as one of the most attractive post offices in any town the size of Fort Myers in America when it was dedicated on December 9, 1933, as much for its building material as for its Neoclassical lines. Embedded in the walls of Florida Key limestone are coral and seashells. During its days as a post office, which ended in the 1960s, customers could pick up their mail any time of day from the open air lockboxes. Today, the building is now home to the Sidney and Berne Davis Art Center.

**AT THE INTERSECTION OF JACKSON AND 1ST STREET, ACROSS JACKSON STREET, ON THE SAME SIDE OF 1ST STREET IS...**

**2. Heitman Building**  
**northwest corner of First Street and Jackson Street**



Harvie E. Heitman hailed from Lexington, North Carolina and came to Fort Myers in 1888 at the age of 16 to work in his great uncle's general store. In 1897 he built the first brick commercial structure in Fort Myers here. He went on to develop many buildings along First Street and was busy expanding his interests through southwest Florida when he died unexpectedly in 1922 at the age of 49. The Heitman Building has had many tenants and alterations through the 20th century and is currently restored to its 1920s Mediterranean Revival appearance.

**ON THE OPPOSITE CORNER IS...**

**3. Bank of Fort Myers  
2282 First Street**



The Bank of Fort Myers took its first deposits in 1906, laying claim to being the first hometown bank. In 1911 this became the town's first building designed solely to house a bank. Harvie E. Heitman, a director of the bank, helmed the construction of the three-story corner brick building. Originally the first floor served as the bank lobby, office space was on the second floor and the third floor was the home of Lodge 631, Independent Order of Odd Fellows. When the Great Depression piled on Florida's own economic difficulties of the late 1920s, the Bank of Fort Myers went under in 1931. The post-bank years were not kind to the historic building - J.C. Penney's was here for awhile and other businesses but the second floor was not occupied after the 1960s and the third floor was vacant since the 1930s. Stuccoed plywood covered the brick facade and the arched arcade removed. In a 2006 restoration the entrance came back and the brick and terra cotta details on the facade cleaned as the century-old building regained its original appearance.

**BEGIN WALKING EAST OF 1ST STREET, PAST THE FEDERAL BUILDING, WHICH WILL BE ON YOUR LEFT.**

**4. Franklin Arms Hotel  
2320 1st Street**



This building began life in 1889 as a boarding house operated by Mary Hill and her daughter Flossie. In 1918 W.P. Franklin purchased the Hill House and gave the three-story structure a Mediterranean Revival makeover in the style of the day. Six years later, with the Florida land boom in full swing, the Franklin Arms Hotel sunk \$300,000 into a seven-story addition and Fort Myers had its first skyscraper. The hotel boasted a rooftop garden and restaurant that quickly became the town's hottest reservation.

**FOLLOW 1ST STREET OUT TO ROUTE 41 AND CAREFULLY CROSS. ON YOUR LEFT IS...**



**5. The Murphy-Burroughs Home**  
**2505 1st Street**



This Georgian Revival adaptation of a Victorian mansion was built in 1901 by Montana rancher John T. Murphy for \$15,000. Following Murphy's death in 1914 the home changed hands a few times before being purchased by businessman Nelson T. Burroughs in 1919. His daughter willed the property to the City upon her death and it looks much as it did when John Murphy first clambered up the steps to the wraparound porch.

**ACROSS THE STREET IS...**

**6. Langford-Kingston House**  
**Corner of First Street and Hough Street**



This grand Prairie School residence with more than 5,000 square feet was built for banking and railroad impresario Walter Galloway Langford in 1919, one year before his death at the age of 47. Langford hired celebrated architect Frances J. Kennard of Tampa to replicate a similar house he had admired in Jacksonville. In 1925 the house was sold to Kokomo transplant George Kingston who invented the first carburetor widely used in the early American automobile industry in 1902. After being owned by the First United Methodist Church for a half-century the red brick house was donated to the City of Fort Myers who moved it here from its original location at Fowler and First streets.

**RETRACE YOUR STEPS BACK ACROSS RT 41 ON 1ST STREET. TURN RIGHT ON BAY STREET, WHICH ANGLES OFF OF 1ST STREET.**

**7. Arcade Theatre**  
**2267 Bay Street**



This theater was originally a vaudeville house when it opened in 1908. Fort Myers resident Thomas Edison sat in the auditorium to view his first films, along with his friends Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone. The Arcade, which features passage through the block to 1st Street, was eventually converted to a full-time movie house. In 1991, with the theater in tatters, Mikhail Baryshnikov headed a benefit that raised enough money to completely restore the Arcade; in 1998 it became the permanent home of the Florida Repertory Theatre.

**8. Brick Bar**  
**2224 Bay Street**



This riverfront warehouse was built in 1925 and was used to process fish for several years before it was abandoned during the Depression. After many years of vacancy it was resurrected as the Dew Drop Inn in 1946. It has hosted dining and entertainment operations sporadically ever since.

**TURN LEFT ON DEAN STREET.**

**9. Morgan Hotel**  
**2207 1st Street at Dean Street**



John Morgan Dean was a furniture dealer in Rhode Island who came to Fort Myers at the turn of the 20th century when in his forties. He purchased 38 acres of swampy lowlands along Billy's Creek

for \$8,500 and set about improving his property. He bought a dredge and pumped in 150,000 cubic yards of sand. In 1914 he opened Fort Myers' first residential development that he called Hyde Park; to day it is Dean Park Historic District. Dean next turned his sights downtown to build a hotel in 1923. He carved out a new street on this property so that his Mediterranean-flavored Morgan Hotel could have rooms facing on both First Street and Dean Street. The new guest house opened with 22 rooms but another 70 were soon added.

**TURN RIGHT ON 1ST STREET AND TURN QUICKLY LEFT ON BROADWAY.**

**10. Kress Building  
1514 Broadway**



Samuel Henry Kress was an art enthusiast and he wanted his five-and-dime stores to stand as public works of art. In Fort Myers \$200,000 was spent to build this buff brick three-story structure. A reported 6,000 people showed up for the grand opening on September 18, 1928. S. H. Kress & Company only stayed here about twenty years but the building today still looks much as it did when those first shoppers went in looking for bargains.

**11. Post Office Arcade  
1520 Broadway**



This building was designed in 1925 by New York City advertising executive George R. Sims; it housed the town's second post office until the Federal Building was constructed by the Works Project Administration during the Depression a few years later. It is currently part of a hotel complex.



**12. Colquitt Building**  
**1528-1542 Broadway**



The building was erected by Henry Colquitt, a real estate developer from Detroit, Michigan, in 1925, and later sold to W.H. Rynolds, Sr. to be used as real estate offices. Modernized several times, the facade, as you can see in the ornamental stucco work and bell tower, retains the character of the Spanish-Mission style prevalent in the Florida boom years.

**TURN RIGHT ON 5TH AVENUE AND WALK DOWN TO THE RIVER. WALK A FEW STEPS TO YOUR LEFT.**

**13. Lee County Courthouse**  
**2120 Main Street between Broadway and Monroe Street**



Early government business in southwest Florida was conducted from Key West, a logistical nightmare that was relieved with the formation of Lee County, named in honor of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, in 1887. The first courthouse was constructed here in the county seat in 1895 at the cost of \$3,640. Within twenty years it could no longer handle the affairs of the growing county. In 1915 this Classical Revival hall of justice was raised from plans drawn by Francis J. Kennard. The price tag was \$85,000. In 1989 the venerable courthouse received a facelift, just before a star turn in the Sean Connery vehicle, *Just Cause*.

**TURN LEFT ON 2ND STREET.**

**14. Gwynne Institute**  
**2nd and Jackson streets**



The first schoolhouse in Fort Myers was a modest log cabin raised in 1873. Early education in the town was plagued by fires, political indifference and a lack of adequate facilities. Andrew D. Gwynne, a wealthy cotton broker and wholesaler who led the Tennessee 38th regiment in the Civil War, was a Fort Myers winter resident who championed education in Lee County. Colonel Gwynne died before he could build the school he wanted but his family donated \$8,000 and additional monies were raised so that Fort Myers was able to get its first modern schoolhouse in 1911. The final cost for the brick academy was \$45,000.

**RETRACE YOUR STEPS BACK TO HENDRY STREET AND TURN RIGHT, HEADING TOWARDS THE WATER.**

**15. Robb & Stucky Building**  
**1625 Hendry Street**



Virgil Robb and W.R. Lee opened a general merchandise store in 1915 and were joined by Harry Stucky two years later. The business flourished and after Lee departed the company in 1925 and operations for the newly named Robb & Stucky moved into this four-story brick warehouse and showroom. Company tradition maintains that Thomas Edison and Henry Ford both bought their furnishings here. The company would grow to 30 showrooms and would almost make it to its centennial before filing for bankruptcy after 96 years in 2011.

**16. R.Q. Richards Building**  
**1615 Hendry Street**



R.Q. Richards owned the Royal Palm Pharmacy and chaired the Fort Myers Kiwanis Club baseball committee. His main job as chairman in the 1920s was to sell one of the 16 big-league clubs on coming to Fort Myers for spring training. The owner he hooked was the immortal Connie Mack who brought his Philadelphia Athletics to town to train every spring from 1925 through 1936. During that time the Athletics had some of the biggest stars in baseball - Jimmy Foxx, Al Simmons, Lefty Grove, Mickey Cochrane - and won two World Championships, spreading the name Fort Myers across the country and establishing the town's spring training baseball tradition. Today tow teams - the Boston Red Sox and Minnesota Twins make Fort Myers their spring training home. R.Q. Richards purchased this Mediterranean-flavored building, erected in 1923, in 1945.

**17. Lee County Bank**  
**2229 Main Street at Hendry Street**



James A. Hendry constructed this corner building in 1911 for his general store. In 1927 the Lee County Bank & Trust moved in, stuccoed over the brick and contributed a Neoclassical look with a pair of fluted Doric columns framing the corner entrance. The bank failed a few years later during the Depression and was reorganized as the Lee County Bank, that stayed around until 1965. Look up to see the ornate clock in the broken pedimented entrance. A colorful tile mosaic of Lee County namesake Robert E. Lee, astride his horse Traveler, was added in a recessed part of the wall along Hendry Street in 1951.

**18. Edison Theatre**  
**1533 Hendry Street**



Fort Myer's best example of Art Deco styling is the Edison Theatre that opened its doors in 1941 with a Charlie Chan double feature, *Rio* and *The Mystery Ship*. Like many of its downtown theater cousins, the Edison fell on hard times in the 1970s and closed in 1981. The splendid facade was preserved as the building was converted into office space. After 40 years of showing movies, the Edison made its big screen debut in the movies in 1985. Film director George Andrew Romero, legendary for his low-budget zombie classics, was living near Fort Myers and used the downtown as the backdrop for his third vision of zombie apocalypse, *Day of the Dead*. The Edison can clearly be seen in the opening set-up shots.

**WALK ANOTHER BLOCK ON HENDRY STREET TO 1ST STREET. ACROSS THE INTERSECTION, TO YOUR YOUR LEFT IS...**

**19. Heitman-Evans Building**  
**2235 First Street at Hendry Street**



As Harvie E. Heitman began rebuilding First Street on this corner he found a crumbling structure from the 1870s. In its stead Heitman poured \$40,000 into what he planned as the most modern hardware store in America. The crisp orange-bricked commercial building featured twelve-inch thick walls and the latest fixtures that included a large Otis safety elevator to move goods to the third floor. His promotional literature boasted, ““Traveling representatives from the largest cities of the north and east (and they ought to know), say that this store has no equal in the United States.”

**ACROSS THE INTERSECTION ON YOUR RIGHT IS...**

**20. Florida Gulf Bank (Bradford Hotel)**  
**2247 1st Street at Hendry Street**



Ambrose McGregor, one of John D. Rockefeller's most trusted lieutenants, came to Fort Myers in 1892 to help fortify the fragile health of his son Bradford. When McGregor himself succumbed to cancer in 1900 at the age of 57 he was considered one of America's ten wealthiest men, leaving an estate of \$4.5 million. Before he died, McGregor had become friendly with shopkeeper Harvie E. Heitman who would eventually translate McGregor seed money into some 30 properties around town. This building began life in 1904 and opened on November 12, 1905 as the Bradford Hotel, named for Bradford McGregor, who had survived his father by a scant two years. The Bradford originally had forty-one rooms with a large dining room on the second floor but expanded through the years as the building has adapted through the decades.

**ON YOUR IMMEDIATE RIGHT IS...**

**21. First National Bank of Fort Myers**  
**Southeast corner of First and Hendry streets**



Dr. Thomas E. Langford brought his family to Fort Myers in 1880 where he forged one of the largest cattle operations in southwest Florida. After his son Walter graduated from Stetson College he joined his father running cows and also became active in land development. After Walter Langford was not named to the Board of Directors of the newly formed Bank of Fort Myers, he organized the First National Bank of Fort Myers in 1907. He was only 33 at the time. When this Neoclassical vault was constructed in 1914 it was hailed as the "finest and best appointed bank building in Florida." It was the only structure in town to be crafted from granite and made generous use of marble inside.

**TURN RIGHT ON 1ST STREET.**

## 22. Earnhardt Building 2260 First Street



Entrepreneur Harvie Heitman transformed First Street by tearing down wooden frame buildings and replacing them with modern structures in the years before the First World War. He used buff brick to fashion this two-story commercial building that stretched 193 feet down the middle of the block and carried, appropriately Heitman's middle name, Earnhardt. Heitman invested \$85,000 in the block that included the only public bathroom in downtown Fort Myers that even provided shoppers hot and cold running water. The longest tenant here was McCrory's five-and-dime, a Pennsylvania retailer, that was a fixture here for more than a half-century. Across the street you can see the other side of the Arcade Theatre that extends to Bay Street.

**WALK A FEW MORE STEPS TO THE TOUR STARTING POINT AT THE INTERSECTION OF 1ST STREET AND JACKSON STREET.**



# A Walking Tour of Sarasota, Florida

## **from walkthetown.com**

In the early 1880s a Scottish investment group led by Sir John Gillespie purchased 60,000 acres from the Florida Land and Improvement Company, sight unseen. That must have been some sales brochure. Gillespie recruited sixty colonists, known as the Ormiston Colonists after his Scottish estate, to sail to the west coast of Florida. They arrived on Christmas Eve, 1885. What they found was land but no improvement; what Gillespie's had purchased boasted one building and a trail. The Scots did not come unprepared, however. In their party was an architect, Alex Browning, to direct any construction necessary. The Scots platted out a street grid and named all the north-south streets running parallel to the water after fruits. Then they put the land up for sale.

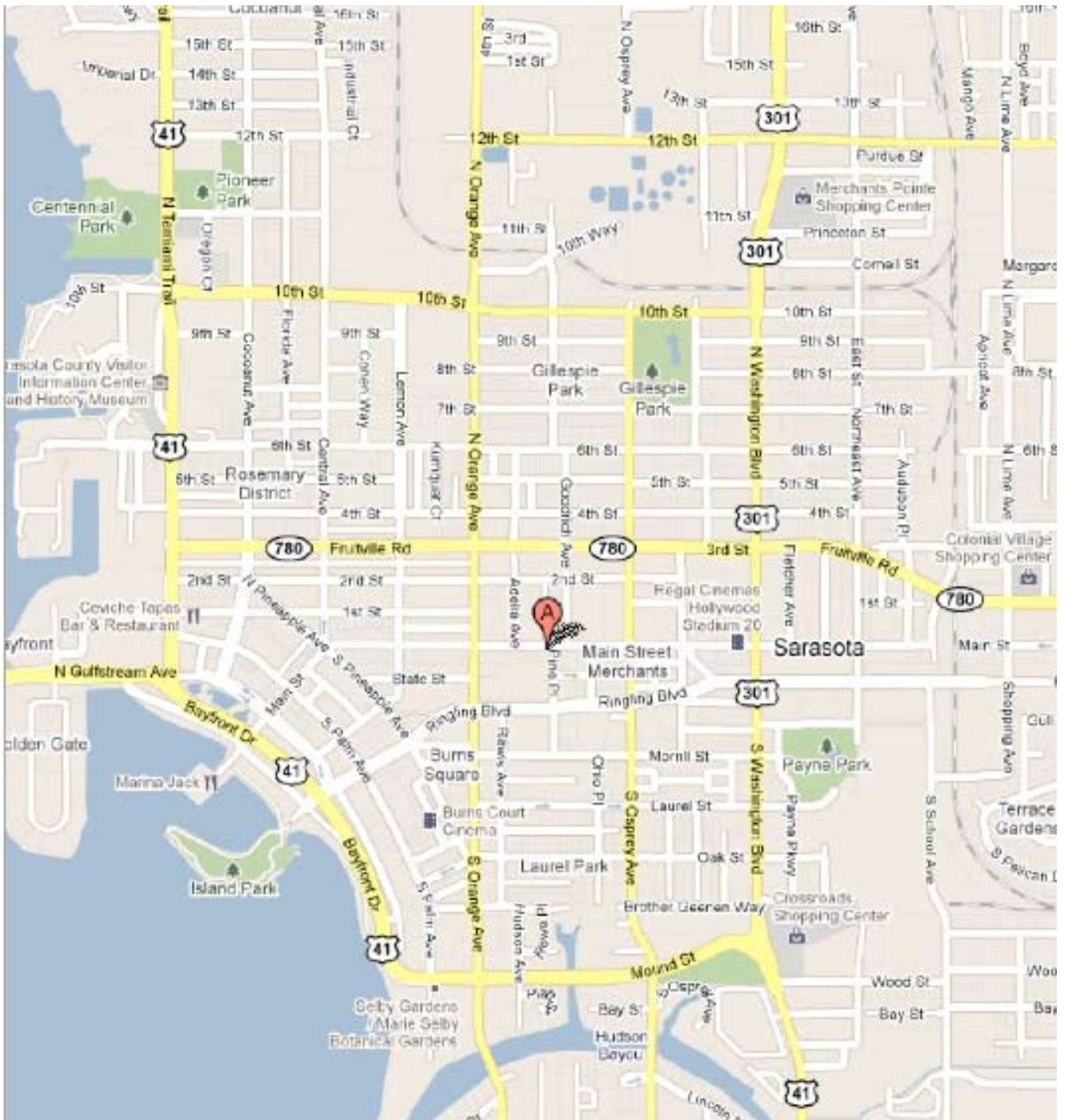
That winter was a cold one, so cold it snowed. Most of the colonists left, they could get that back home.

When no land sold in 1886 and only eight lots in 1887, the directors of the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company ordered a voluntary liquidation of their holdings. Gillespie's son, J. Hamilton, remained in Sarasota to see what could be made from his personal holdings. It was slow going. By the end of the century the families in Sarasota numbered about 15, fisherman mostly, and the streets were used primarily by cattle and swine. "Fleas," it was noted, "outranked everything in population."

In 1902 Sarasota was incorporated as a town, and Gillespie was the first mayor. Municipal improvements included the paving of four miles of streets with two miles of cement sidewalks. By 1913 Sarasota was incorporated as a city as the population inched over 1,000. About that time Bertha Honore Palmer, widow of Chicago department store pioneer Palmer Potter, was lured to the area by an advertisement placed in a newspaper by A.B. Edwards, the first mayor after Sarasota became a city. Palmer declared Sarasota Bay every bit the equal of the Bay of Naples in southern Italy for beauty and raved about the sport fishing. Her comments were played up in the press and triggered the development of Sarasota as a resort destination. She purchased 90,000 acres in the area and with her sons developed an innovative cattle ranch.

Another pioneering resident was Alfred Ringling, one of the five Wisconsin brothers who established the famous Ringling Brothers Circus. The families of siblings Charles and John followed and not only were the Ringlings major players in the physical development of the city but they carried the Sarasota name around the world when they established their winter quarters here in 1919.

Our walking tour of Sarasota will begin in the historic center of town where just over 100 years ago John Hamilton Gillespie stood watching the cows and pigs and wondered if anyone was ever going to come...



**1. Five Points**  
**intersection of Main, Pineapple and Central streets**



This intersection, where the right angle of the Sarasota street grid meets the curve of the bayfront streets has been the historic center of downtown since the first Scottish settlers built a boarding house here in 1885. Plans were hatched to build the town's first skyscraper here but construction snafus delayed the seven-story First Bank and Trust Building enough that it became Sarasota's second high-rise. The Neoclassical structure has been demolished and the Plaza at Five Points now stands in its place, looming over Sarasota's most historic intersection.

**WALK EAST ON MAIN STREET, AWAY FROM SRSOTA BAY (THE PLAZA AT FIVE POINTS WILL BE ON YOUR LEFT AS YOU PASS).**

**2. Kress Building**  
**1442 Main Street**



Samuel Kress founded S.H. Kress & Co. in 1896 and developed five-and-dime stores nationwide. An avid art collector, Kress took pride in creating beautiful buildings and heartily embraced the Art Deco style of the 1930s and \$50,000 was spent to create this Egyptian-flavored Deco palace in 1932. Building ornamentation is executed in buff tile and glazed terra-cotta. Although the Kress stores are no longer, look up to the familiar "Kress" masthead in gilded letters.

**3. Worth's Block (The Gator Club)**  
**1490 Main Street**



This is one of the first brick commercial buildings to appear in Sarasota and the only one that shoppers from a century ago would recognize. William Worth migrated from Georgia in 1903 and purchased this corner at Lemon and Main. He constructed a wooden store that was adequate until 1912 when his ambitious 22-year old son, William “David,” bought the business and constructed this 100-foot deep two-story building. The first floor was occupied by the family grocery and the Worth family resided upstairs. Worth left in 1914 for business adventures that would take him to Savannah, back into the store for a bit, San Diego and back to Sarasota. The building was converted into the Gator Bar & Grille in the 1930 and after decades under suffocating metal sheathing was rehabilitated back to its original appearance when it became the Gator Club in 1988.

**BEGIN WALKING EAST OF 1ST STREET, PAST THE FEDERAL BUILDING, WHICH WILL BE ON YOUR LEFT.**

**4. Canandaigua National Trust**  
**1586 Main Street**



This two-story buff brick building began life as the headquarters of the First National Trust but the bank was doomed by the Depression. In 1931 the Kickliter Brothers Hardware and Paint Company moved into the space. Today it is once again a bank and although the first floor looks like a hardware store look up to the Neoclassical styling of arched windows capped by keystones and corner brick pilasters that are topped with cast metal urns. Under the eave is a finely crafted frieze of decorative tile.

**5. First Baptist Church**  
**1661 Main Street**



This congregation organized in 1902 with five members. The first Sanctuary, now serving as a chapel, was dedicated December 14, 1924. Property immediately east of the church on Main Street was purchased in 1951 and the present Sanctuary cornerstone was laid May 29, 1962.

**6. Links Plaza**  
**Main Street and Links Avenue**



Born in 1852 in Edinburgh, Scotsman J. Hamilton Gillespie inherited an heirloom set of golf clubs at the age of eight, and when he was sent by his father in 1886 to Sarasota to manage the floundering Florida Mortgage and Investment Company Gillespie was an interested in establishing golf as a new town. Soon after his arrival, he carved the land behind his home into a two-hole golf course. In 1905, while serving as mayor of Sarasota Gillespie laid out a nine-hole course at this location, one of a half-dozen he created in Florida. After Gillespie disposed of his Sarasota interests in 1910 he returned to Scotland to train soldiers for World War I. He came back to Sarasota and was on the golf course when he suffered a fatal heart attack in 1923.

**7. The Crisp Building**  
**1970 Main Street**



This is one of the best surviving examples of Mediterranean Revival commercial architecture remaining in Sarasota from the 1920s. Thomas H. Crisp arrived in Sarasota in 1924 and this was



one of his first projects, developing land purchased from Charles Ringling. Crisp's vision helped stimulate the rise of the east end of Main Street into what the *Sarasota Herald* declared was the "finest and fastest growing development in the city."

## **8. Sarasota County Courthouse 2000 Main Street**



Sarasota County was carved from Manatee County in 1921 setting in motion plans for this home for the new county government. Land was donated by Charles and Edith Ringling and New York architect Dwight James Baum, who had just completed a mansion for John Ringling, was hired to design the courthouse. When he was up north Baum's work tended towards the classical; in Florida his designs were almost exclusively Mediterranean Revival. here he created an H-shaped structure with a dramatic tower dominating the hyphen between the rectangular buildings. The courthouse is adorned with polychromed glazed terra cotta tiles and cast stone decorations; nationally known wrought iron artist Samuel Yellin created many of the elaborate grills and railings. Red barrel tiles for the roof were imported from Spain. After later additions to the courthouse covered the original facade along Ringling Boulevard you can only view the composition from the Main Street side.

**RETRACE YOUR STEPS TO WASHINGTON BOULEVARD AND TURN LEFT. WALK ONE BLOCK TO RINGLING BOULEVARD.**

## **9. Sarasota Terrace Hotel 101 South Washington Boulevard at Ringling Boulevard**



Built by Charles Ringling in 1925 on the site of the number one green of the Old Gillespie Golf Course, this building was originally known as the Ringling Terrace Hotel. It later became known as the Sarasota Terrace Hotel. In 1962 it was purchased by Arthur Allyn to house the Chicago White Sox baseball team during spring training. The building was purchased by Sarasota County in 1972. After extensive remodeling, it is now the Sarasota County Administration Center.



## **TURN RIGHT ON RINGLING BOULEVARD.**

### **10. Charles Ringling Building 1924 Ringling Boulevard**



When he wasn't looking after his circus interests Charles Edward Ringling was investing in real estate and promoting the development of Sarasota where he established a residence in 1912. Here he purchased John Gillespie's golf course to create a business section in what had formerly been a sandy wasteland. While architects Clas, Shepherd & Clas out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin were building him a million dollar mansion Ringling also had them draw up plans for this commercial property. For most of its life this stuccoed 1926 Mediterranean Revival building has housed restaurants and nightclubs.

## **TURN RIGHT ON ORANGE AVENUE.**

### **11. Federal Building 111 South Orange Avenue**



Depression-era Works Projects Administration funds brought this Neoclassical post office to Sarasota in 1931. The symmetrically proportioned building, fronted by an octet of fluted Corinthian columns, was designed by New York architect George Albree Freeman. Then in his seventies, Freeman died a few years later and this is considered his last major work.

## **TURN LEFT ON STATE STREET. TURN RIGHT ON PINEAPPLE STREET.**

**12. First Church**  
**104 South Pineapple Avenue**



The first church organized in Sarasota in October of 1891, meeting in a schoolhouse in Main Street when the circuit-riding preacher arrived in town. The church was formally organized with 12 charter members in a small building across from the current sanctuary. The congregation moved here in 1914 and settled into this Colonial Revival church on Christmas Day, 1955.

**CONTINUE ON PINEAPPLE STREET BACK TO FIVE CORNERS. TURN LEFT ON MAIN STREET. AFTER A HALF-BLOCK, TURN LEFT ON MIRA MAR COURT.**

**13. Roth Cigar Factory**  
**30 Mira Mar Court**



Tampa took the lead in cigar-making on Florida's west coast but cigar-making in Sarasota blossomed in 1911 with the founding of the Saratoga Cigar Company by the Hill brothers, Jack and John. Within a short time the Hills were churning out 2,000 cigars a day but the company disappeared in 1916. Another set of brothers, Edward and Michael Roth, got into the game in 1917, rolling cigars at their newsstand on Main Street. In 1923 the Roths moved into this Spanish Mission building roll their 8-cent cigars. Sarasota's cigar tradition ended when the Roths vacated the property in 1938.

**TURN RIGHT DOWN THE ALLEY BESIDE THE ROTH CIGAR FACTORY. AT THE END OF THE ALLEY, ON YOUR LEFT IS...**

**14. DeMarcay Hotel**  
**27 South Palm Avenue**



Scottish-born Andrew McAnsh ground through a business directory of careers before helping shape the Sarasota streetscape as an important developer in the 1920s. He began his career in Chicago in a haberdashery and ran a grocery and then a restaurant and wound up in the Chicago political machine. He then began manufacturing furniture before shifting into constructing buildings. In Sarasota he erected the the Mira Mar Apartments in 1922, receiving the largest individual building permit ever issued by the city to that point. The Spanish Mission style of this two-story hotel, constructed about the same time, complements the Mira Mar.

**TURN RIGHT ON PALM AVENUE. AT THE INTERSECTION OF MAIN STREET, ON YOUR LEFT IS...**

**15. American National Bank**  
**1330 Main Street at Palm Avenue**



This is the only one of the earliest Sarasota skyscrapers to retain its original appearance. That is a Neoclassical look provided by Ohio-born architect Francis P. Smith who settled in Atlanta and enjoyed a career of over 60 years. Completed in 1926, the nine-story tower follows the convention of designing high-rise buildings in the manner of a classical Greek column with a defined base (the impressive stone street level), a shaft (the unadorned central stories) and a capital (the decorated top floor).

The American National Bank had organized in 1925 in the optimism of the Florida land and closed its doors on May 15, 1928 after less than two years in its new home. In 1936 the building was converted into a 125-room Orange Blossom Hotel. Since the 1960s the building has done duty as apartments but through various modernizations has retained its classical exterior visage.

## **ACROSS THE INTERSECTION, TO YOUR RIGHT IS...**

### **16. Palm Tower**

**1343 Main Street at Palm Avenue**



This building began life as a two-story boarding house that was transformed into seven stories and became Sarasota's first skyscraper, although developer W.H. Pipcorn of Milwaukee probably wouldn't recognize it today. It operated as the Hotel Sarasota until 1974.

## **CONTINUE ON NORTH PALM AVENUE AS IT BENDS ACROSS COCOANUT AVENUE.**

### **17. Sarasota Woman's Club**

**1241 North Palm Avenue at Coconut Avenue**



The Sarasota Woman's Club has its roots in the Town Improvement Society that began agitating for streetlights and sidewalks in 1903. In 1915 the Woman's Club moved into this low-slung Tudor Revival clubhouse that also housed the town library until 1941. The club moved on in 1976 and the building became the home of the Florida Studio Theatre.

### **18. Frances-Carlton Apartments**

**1221-1227 North Palm Avenue**



Frances was Tampa architect Francis James and Carlton was the name of developers Carlton Olin Teate, Junior and Senior. The complex of Spanish-Moorish style buildings was constructed in

1924 as furnished apartments. James designed the project in tandem with Alex Browning who was responsible for many of Sarasota's earliest buildings. In the business listings of the 1924 Sarasota Directory, Browning is the only listed architect. The pink stucco was of a darker tint in its fledgling days but the distinctive multi-paned windows - different on each of the three stories - looks the same. When the apartments opened, both Teates moved in.

**19. F.A. DeCanizares House**  
**1215 North Palm Street**



This house was known as Chateau Petite when it was moved here in 1923 but it was anything but exotic - merely a squarish wooden two-story box stripped of any ornamentation. Once here the developer gave the exterior a Mediterranean Revival makeover with stucco and pre-cast ornaments. The roofline was given a stylish shaped parapet and one-story wings were added, including a porte-cochere. The house was purchased by Frederic A. DeCanizares of the Philadelphia suburbs as a winter home.

**20. L.D. Reagin Residence**  
**1213 North Palm Avenue**



This Mediterranean-style two-story structure was designed by Thomas Reed Martin and is representative of his work that helped popularize "Floridan Architecture." Today a restaurant, it was constructed as a house in 1926 for Leslie D. Reagin, owner and editor of the *Sarasota Daily and Weekly Times*. The paper went out of business in 1929 shortly after the stock market crashed and Reagin went on to serve as Postmaster of the City of Sarasota from 1933 until his working days ended in 1945.

**TURN RIGHT ON TAMIAMI TRAIL. TURN RIGHT ON 1ST STREET.**

**21. Sarasota Times Building**  
**1216 1st Street**



The *Saratoga Times* was reporting the events of the town back in 1899 before there was an official town. When L.D. Reagin purchased the paper he moved the operations from Main Street to this property next to his house. He hired esteemed architect Dwight James Baum, designer of the Saratoga County Courthouse and other prominent buildings, to come up with a new *Times* building. Well versed in Spanish Mission architecture from his travels in Southern California, Baum created one of his most successful Spanish Eclectic buildings here. On the First Street facade notice the use of three different door types and enframements. The *Sarasota Times* unfortunately scarcely lasted long enough to leave ink stains here as it folded in 1929 but the building has survived; currently it has been adapted for a restaurant.

**22. The Gompertz**  
**1247 1st Street**



The Levinson family opened the Park-Seventh Movie House in this building in 1925 but went dark during the Depression. Since then there have been long stretches of vacancy and four name changes. Today the salmon-hued Mediterranean-style building is part of the Florida Studio Theatre, featuring a 160-seat performance space.



**23. Warren Building**  
**1269 1st Street**



This delightful Mediterranean Revival commercial building was constructed in 1926; the “Warren” was realtor Clark Warren - “He knows where money grows.” The building was spared a date with the wrecking ball in the 1990s and rehabilitated.

**24. Selby Public Library**  
**1331 1st Street**



The first books were lent in Sarasota in 1907 after Colonel John H. Gillespie donated 300 books from his personal collection and provided a room in the Sarasota Bank for their dispersal. In 1939 the City of Sarasota assumed control of the library with a \$5000 yearly budget and built a library on North Tamiami Trail. This facility, designed by Eugene Aubrey, opened in 1998 with space for 300,000 volumes - a thousand times to size of the original collection.

**WALK BACK TO PINEAPPLE AVENUE AND TURN LEFT.**

**25. Edwards Theater**  
**61 North Pineapple Avenue**



Arthur B. Edwards was born in the area before it was even settled and was a life-long promoter of Sarasota during a life that lasted 95 years. When it became a city in 1914 he was mayor and the centerpiece of his vision of Sarasota as a world-class resort city was this theater. Constructed

in 1926 and given crisp Mediterranean design by Roy Benjamin, the multi-use building featured shops behind its arcaded street level, offices on the second floor, including Edwards' own insurance and real estate office, and furnished apartments on the third floor. The 1500-seat auditorium was configured for touring vaudeville acts, opera performances and silent films.

Opening night featured concerts and a screening of the silent comedy, *Skinner's Dress Suit*, with Reginald Denny in the lead. In 1952 the Florida Theater, as it was called after 1936, hosted the world premiere of Cecil B DeMille's paean to the Big Top, "The Greatest Show On Earth." The movie had included scenes shot around Sarasota with Jimmy Stewart and Charlton Heston in the leads. Later that decade a young Elvis Presley performed here.

The Florida Theater shuttered in 1973 and was later purchased by the Sarasota Opera Association which spent many years renovating the building prior to a re-opening in 1993. Look up at the corner to see a rendering of "The Opera Imp" sculpted by Ethelia M. Patmagrian.

**CONTINUE ON PINEAPPLE AVENUE TO FIVE POINTS AND THE START OF THE WALKING TOUR.**

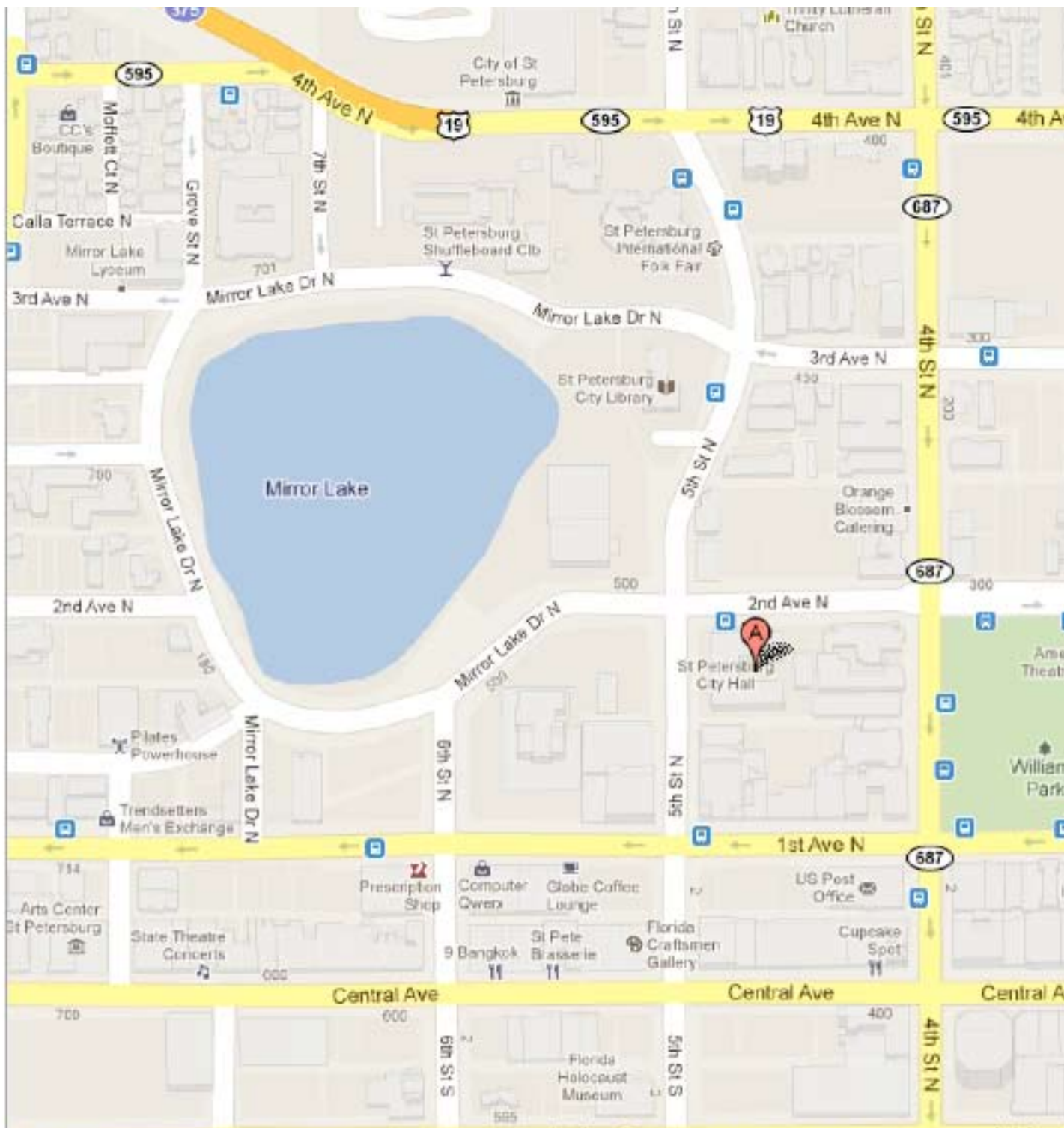
# A Walking Tour of St. Petersburg, Florida from **walkthetown.com**

Incorporated in 1903, St. Petersburg was new type of American city for a new century. Before St. Petersburg towns grew up with an industrial base, exploiting their natural resources or advantageous trade location. Here, the town grew up as a recreation destination. When town leaders dredged the harbor it was for pleasure boats and a 29-acre yacht basin - in fact water commerce was actively shuffled south, outside of the town. And the people did come to play. In the first quarter of the 20th century the population rose from less than 2,000 at the time of incorporation to an estimated 26,000.

In fact St. Petersburg received the stamp of approval as “Sunshine City” by no less an authority than the American Medical Association as far back as 1885. Dr. W.C. Van Bibber reported the results of his research that indicated that Pinellas Point peninsula was the sunniest place in the United States. Seldom has a proclamation before an august scientific body been so publicized to the public as this one, thanks to promoters of St. Petersburg. Millions of dollars was expended spreading the word about America’s new Sunshine City. Lew Brown, the publisher of the St. Petersburg Independent announced that the entire edition of his afternoon paper would be given away FREE if the sun failed to show by 3:00 p.m. In 26 years the Independent was distributed free 123 times, five times a year.

Developing solely as a tourist resort turned out exactly as town founder John Williams envisioned it. In 1875 the Detroit native purchased 2,500 acres along Tampa Bay with pictures of graceful parks and broad boulevards dancing in his head. Not much happened on Pinellas Peninsula until 1888 when Williams convinced exiled Russian nobleman, the anglicized Peter Demens, to route his Orange Belt Railway here. The popular story goes that the two men flipped a coin to name the town and Demens won, christening the community after his birthplace in Russia. When Williams constructed the first resort hotel in town he called it Detroit for his home town.

A town as unique as St. Petersburg demands a unique walking tour and ours will involve a walk around a park and a walk around a lake, both in the center of town, and we’ll start off in the park...



**1. Williams Park**  
**between 1st and 2nd Avenues North and 3rd and 4th Streets North**



This square of greenspace was included in the original street plat for St. Petersburg in 1888 and a bandshell has been the centerpiece almost as long. The first wooden structure was erected in 1895 and blown away in a hurricane in 1921. It was replaced with a textbook clamshell that worked until the current bandshell was installed in 1954. William Harvard provided the award-winning design. In 1910 the park, called City Park from its beginning, was named for town founder John Considine Williams and dedicated by his widow, Sarah.

**WE'LL EXPLORE THE BUILDING THAT LOOK OUT ON WILLIAMS PARK BY WALKING CLOCKWISE AROUND THE SQUARE. START ON THE WEST SIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BLOCK, ACROSS 4TH STREET WITH THE BUILDING THAT LOOKS LIKE A GREEK TEMPLE...**

**2. The First Baptist Church**  
**120 Fourth Street North**



This classical Greek temple is a rare look for St. Petersburg. It was designed for the Baptists in 1924 by George Feltham with a full-height Corinthian portico supporting a broad pediment. Each of the stone pillars rests on a four-foot high stone base. The congregation started a peripatetic base in 1891 before settling in this location in 1911. The church building that preceded this formidable structure was a wooden building that had been carted from the prior location on Central Avenue.

**MOVING TO YOUR RIGHT, THE NEXT CHURCH, ON THE CORNER, IS...**

**3. St. Peter's Episcopal Church**  
**140 4th Street North**



St. Peter's began in 1889 as an unorganized mission and organized formally in 1894. In 1899 this Gothic Revival brick church was completed. Even though the tower at that time was only about half its current size, St. Peter's dwarfed its surroundings at the edge of Williams Park.

**ACROSS THE STREET FROM ST. PAUL'S AND CATTY-CORNER FROM WILLIAMS PARK IS...**

**4. Randolph Hotel**  
**200 4th Street North**



The heart of this building goes back to 1901 and a wooden frame lodge that offered furnished rooms. The current stylish Art Deco look on the streetside facades came in 1939. Look up to see horizontal banding, corner windows and an eyebrow ledge above the third story. Known as the Randolph Hotel since 1939, rooms are still available here.

**TURN RIGHT AND WALK ALONG 2ND AVENUE PAST THE BANDSHELL TO THE OPPOSITE CORNER AT 3RD STREET.**



**5. First United Methodist Church**  
**212 Third Street North at 2nd Avenue**



This congregation formed in 1887 and grew so fast that when this red brick sanctuary was raised in 1925 it was the church's fourth and third on this site. James Baldwin designed the building in an English Gothic style dominated by a 144-foot square bell tower. The ornamentation is cast concrete and its ten stained glass windows depicting the life of Christ were crafted by George Hardy Payne Studios of Patterson, New Jersey.

**TURN AND WALK THROUGH THE PARK TO THE MIDDLE OF 1ST AVENUE.**

**6. Dennis Hotel**  
**326 1st Avenue North**



Although it operates today as the Williams Park Hotel and the ghost sign near the roof harkens back to an earlier incarnation as the McCarthy Hotel, this was the Dennis Hotel when it opened on December 15, 1925. Nick Dennis was a New York hotel and restaurant man when he decided to move to St. Petersburg in 1914 and try his hand with the resort trade. He began with the Park Cafeteria on this block and was ready to build a hotel with the Florida land boom in full swing in the 1920s. He hired Harry F. Cunningham, a professor of architecture at George Washington University and designer of several important buildings in the nation's capital, to design his building. Cunningham delivered a Neoclassical eight-story building, three bays wide, dominated by two-story Corinthian pilasters and decorated in cast-stone and terra-cotta. After he was finished here Cunningham went to Nebraska to finish work on the state capitol and to this day the Cornhusker State's highest award for architectural excellence, given annually, is named for Harry F. Cunningham. Nick Dennis was able to guide his 76-room guest house through Florida's real estate collapse and the nation's Great Depression.

The adjacent building to the west at #336 was once the home of the Woman's Town Improvement Association. Although the street level of the two-story brick building has been severely compromised you can look up and see the arched windows of the 1913 Neoclassical structure.

**TURN RIGHT AND WALK TO THE SOUTHWESTERN CORNER OF THE PARK. EXIT THE PARK BY TURNING LEFT ON 4TH STREET.**

**7. Open Air Post Office**  
**400 First Avenue North at 4th Street**



When St. Petersburg was slated to get a new post office in the early 1900s the typical federal treatment was planned with a monumental temple resting atop a grand flight of stairs. Postmaster Roy Hanna had his own ideas. His vision involved a more user-friendly building of a single story at street level. He submitted plans that drew inspiration from the public building of Florence, Italy. Furthermore, Hanna wanted a loggia open on three sides to give customers access to the postal lockboxes all the time. America's first open-air post office became a reality in 1916 after Hanna's ideas were formalized by architect George W. Stuart. Stuart's circuitous path to St. Petersburg began in Glasgow, Scotland where he was born in 1856. The Stuart family moved to Ontario in Canada and after a college education and four years as an architect's apprentice George found himself fighting the Sioux and Blackfeet in Canada's last Indian War. He survived being shot with an arrow in the neck and resumed his architectural career in Winnipeg, Dallas, Atlanta and eventually St. Petersburg. Look up to see a colorful frieze of Mediterranean tiles and whimsical capitals with dolphins and shells on the columns of the arcaded loggia.

**AT CENTRAL AVENUE TURN RIGHT.**

**8. Snell Arcade**  
**405 Central Avenue**



C. Perry Snell first discovered this area on his wedding trip in 1898. He would emerge as the man most responsible for shaping the look of St. Petersburg in the early 20th century. His crowning glory was the conversion of a small island of sand and mangroves into one of the town's first residential subdivisions, called Snell Island. Downtown he developed this iconic tower in the 1920s. Richard Kiehnel, credited with introducing the Mediterranean Revival style to Florida designed

the lavishly decorated building with input from the widely traveled Snell, who kept his office here. The most colorful of his business tenants was an outdoor night club called Spanish Bob's. Snell was forced to sell his tower during the Depression and after years as office space it was converted to condominiums in 2003.

Across the street is the building of the National Bank of St. Petersburg that organized in 1905 and was one of the early town's most powerful banks until it closed during the Depression in 1931. The 1912 bank building was hidden behind an ornamental aluminum covering in 1960. Some historic buildings have been rescued from such treatments by preservationists but that is not the case here. The aluminum also hides the slightly taller Pheil Hotel that was started in 1916 by Adam Pheil who claimed to be the world's first commercial airline passenger when he paid \$400 for a airboat trip to Tampa in 1914.

## **9. Kress Building** **475 Central Avenue**



Samuel H. Kress took as much pride in the artistic appearance of his five-and-dime stores as he did in the profits they churned out in the early 1900s. This is actually one of the least elaborate of the Kress downtown buildings gracing the streets of towns around Florida. Look up to see the trademark "Kress" masthead in gold, framed by classical rooftop urns.

## **10. Alexander Hotel** **535 Central Avenue**



Before this hotel, although it appears modest today, was constructed in 1919 guest houses in St. Petersburg were small wooden frame affairs financed by their owner-operators. The Alexander marked a shift to stylishly designed hotels of the type new travelers to Florida had come to expect. Georgia architect Neel Reid, who had studied in Paris at the Ecole de Beaux Arts and was a champion of the Renaissance Revival style, provided the classical design for Robert Lee Ely and Jacob Alexander's hotel. Alexander, a North Carolinian politician, provided the seed money and Ely,

who operated the town's first cafeteria-style restaurant, brought the nuts-and-bolts experience to the venture.

**11. State Theater**  
**685-687 Central Avenue**



This building began life in 1924 as the Alexander National Bank, boasting a beautifully proportioned Beaux Arts design from Neel Reid. The three bays are defined by quoined pilasters topped by sinewy Ionic capitals; the pattern is carried to the columns supporting the arched opening in each bay. When founder Jason Alexander passed away in 1926 his bank collapsed. Another bank, Fidelity Bank and Trust, moved in three months before the stock market crashed in 1929. No other financial institution was standing in line to try its luck and the building was used as office space until 1949 when it was remodeled as the State Theater which is still hosting concerts.

**12. The Green-Richman Arcade**  
**689 Central Avenue**



It is believed that a dozen or so shopping arcades were constructed in St. Petersburg between the First and Second World Wars; this is one of only three remaining. John Green and William Richman were real estate developers who constructed this building 1925. George Feltham, a noted early architect in town dating back to 1913 provided the Spanish Mission style design.

**TURN RIGHT ON 7TH STREET. TURN RIGHT ON 1ST AVENUE. A HALF-BLOCK DOWN TURN LEFT ON MIRROR LAKE DRIVE NORTH AND WALK TO THE LAKE. MIRROR LAKE WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED RESERVOIR LAKE AND WAS THE FIRST SOURCE OF PUBLIC DRINKING WATER FOR THE TOWN. TURN LEFT AND WALK CLOCKWISE AROUND THE LAKE, FOLLOWING MIRROR LAKE DRIVE NORTH.**

### **13. Unitarian Universalist Church**

**719 Arlington Avenue North at Mirror Lake Drive**



The church started with Pearl Cole who was yearning to find a church less rigid than traditional doctrines in the early 1900s. But her family of three was too small to start a church. When the West family of Philadelphia and similar thinking arrived in St. Petersburg the two families and eight members launched the Universalist church in town. For many years as the tiny congregation picked up new adherents services were held in private homes and rented space around town. After merging with the Unitarians in 1928 this charming, tree-shrouded Spanish Colonial meetinghouse was constructed. The church building on the shores of Mirror Lake was designed by Philip Horton Smith.

### **14. Mirror Lake Lyceum**

**737 3rd Avenue North at Mirror Lake Drive**



The members of the First Christian Church of St. Petersburg began assembling in January 1900 and had prospered sufficiently by the 1920s to construct this Mission Revival styled sanctuary capable of hosting 1,000 worshipers. By 1992 the congregation had dwindled to about 40 regular congregants showing up for services and the building was sold. It has since been renovated into banquet and conference space, taking advantage of the old church's 53-foot domed ceiling.

**15. St. Petersburg High School**  
**701 Mirror Lake Drive North**



St. Petersburg High School, founded in 1898, moved into this impressive four-story home in 1919. The highschoolers only stayed until 1926, however, before moving into what was billed as America's first million-dollar high school on 5th Avenue. The building continued to educate younger grades until 1964. After that it was an adult education center and has been a residential complex since 1991. The Mission Revival style was provided by St. Louis architect William Ittner, considered the most influential man in school architecture in the United States. Ittner has a star on the St. Louis Walk of Fame.

**16. St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club**  
**559 Mirror Lake Drive**



The St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club was the first organized club of its kind. The first courts were laid out in this park in 1923 and the clubhouse, designed by Harry Cunningham, was constructed four years later. The original building was a small rectangular structure with a steeply sloping roof. The complex now includes four masonry buildings, including a dance hall added in 1937, a grandstand and 65 hard-surfaced courts. Shuffleboard became popular as a deck game on board passenger ships and the first modern courts fashioned on land were constructed in Daytona in 1913. St. Petersburg's were the second.

**TURN RIGHT ON 5TH STREET.**



**17. Mirror Lake Library**  
**280 Fifth Street North**



After selling his steel company for \$400 million to become the world's richest man, Andrew Carnegie set out to give his money all away. One of his pet causes was public libraries and he would fund over 2,500 across the world. St. Petersburg received a grant of \$17,500 to build the first home of its public library system in 1913 after a five-year process; it was one of 11 Carnegie libraries constructed in Florida. Henry D. Whitfield, a Carnegie Corporation architect, provided the Beaux Arts design with a Spanish flavor once the eye reaches the roofline.

**18. Municipal Utilities Building/St. Petersburg City Hall**  
**175 5th Street North at 2nd Avenue**



In a unique funding arrangement during the Depression of the 1930s the federal government provided a grant of \$175,000 and a self-liquidating loan of \$214,000 to be paid with revenue from the city gas works to pay for this building. A stipulation of the deal required that it carry the name "Municipal Utility Building." The structure blends elements of the then popular Art Deco style with the locally favored Mediterranean style (clay tile roof, wrought iron balconettes and vertical towers).

**WALK A FEW STEPS BEHIND CITY HALL ALONG 2ND AVENUE TO SEE...**

**19. City Hall Annex**  
**440 2nd Avenue North**



This is one of the first brick buildings constructed in St. Petersburg, back in 1901, and is one of the oldest buildings in the downtown area. It was funded with money provided by Edwin H. Tomlinson, one of early St. Petersburg's most colorful characters and its greatest early benefactor, funding a church and a hospital and other public works. Tomlinson hailed from Connecticut and made his fortune in mining. He first wintered in the area in 1891 and eventually built one of the town's grandest Victorian palaces. He also owned the first automobile in St. Petersburg. Tomlinson was a fixture at most town celebrations and hosted great parties for the town children. This building was the Domestic Science and Manual Training School, as fine a learning institution as any town of a couple thousand inhabitants could boast of in America. The school relocated to Mirror Lake as the Tomlinson Vocational School in 1925 and the building did duty as home to a succession of civic organizations until the City acquired it in 1981. The old school has been restored, preserving the fine brick work on the rectangular Vernacular building.

**RETRACE YOUR STEPS TO 5TH STREET AND TURN LEFT, WALKING PAST THE FRONT OF CITY HALL TO THE CORNER OF 1ST AVENUE.**

**20. Suwannee Hotel**  
**501 1st Avenue North at 5th Street**



During the height of Florida's land boom in the early 1920s it was not unusual for folks with a house in an advantageous location to surrender their homes to chase the riches. Such was the case here when John Brown, who was serving as Clerk of the Circuit Court at the time, built the Suwannee Hotel on the site of his home. Opened in 1924 the building was rehabilitated in 1993 as offices for Pinellas County.

**TURN LEFT ON 1ST AVENUE.**

**21. Christ United Methodist Church**  
**467 1st Avenue North**



Local architect Archie Parrish tapped into the Italian renaissance and Art Deco styles for elements to this church, completed in 1949. For the base and trim he used shell-base Florida coquina stone. The congregation traces its roots to 1891.

**22. Princess Martha Hotel**  
**411 First Avenue North at 4th Street**



This was the first hotel in St. Petersburg to be financed by the sale of public stock so a lot of people lost money instead of only a few when it went bankrupt in the Florida real estate collapse. Enough subscribers were found in the 1923 offering to bring \$1.5 million to bear on the construction and furnishings of this Neoclassical red brick hotel that was completed in 1924. The H-shaped design allowing air to circulate and more window space for guests was provided by the Boston firm of James H. Ritchie and Associates through a partner, Frank Jonsberg, who had retired to St. Petersburg but agreed to helm the project when the original architect was fired. William Muir bailed the hotel out of bankruptcy and named it after his wife. The building was renovated in 1988 as a residential property.

**YOU HAVE NOW RETURNED TO THE TOUR STARTING POINT AT WILLIAMS PARK.**

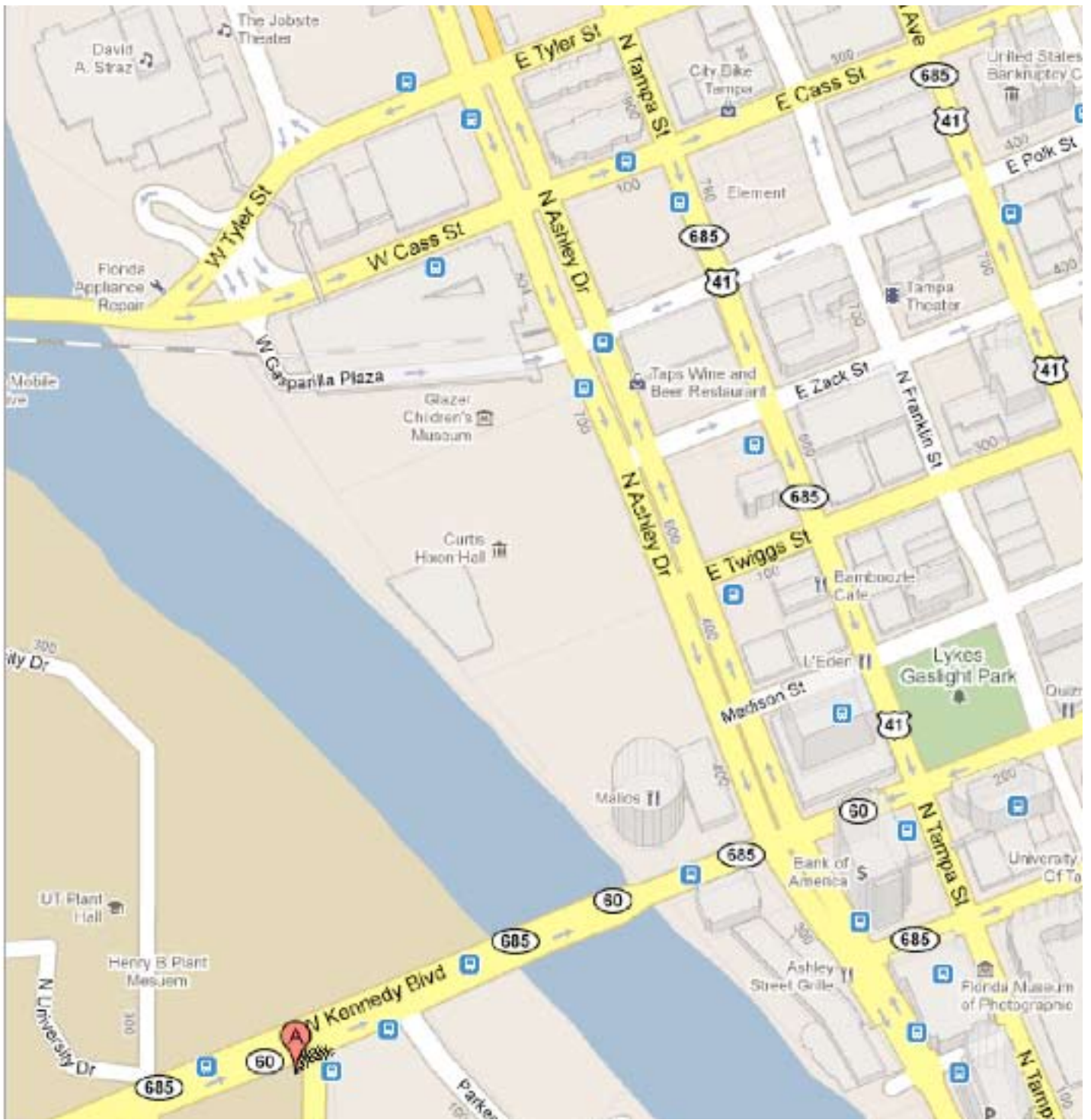
# A Walking Tour of Tampa, Florida

## **from [walkthetown.com](http://walkthetown.com)**

After the United States purchased Florida from Spain in 1821 the government built a series of forts and trading posts to attempt to get control of the new territory. The post at the mouth of the Hillsborough River where it spills into Tampa Bay was named Fort Brooke, constructed by Colonel George Mercer Brooke in 1824. Enough settlers came to live near the protection of the fort that in 1831 a post office called Tampa Bay was established.

Isolation was the hallmark for the small community for the next 50 years. With access only by sandy road the population in 1880 was still only 720. Things would change in a hurry, however. First, phosphate was discovered southeast of town and as large quantities of the mineral were being shipped out of the port Henry Plant's railroad arrived in 1884. In 1886 when Key West cigar manufacturers began experiencing labor difficulties the Tampa Board of Trade enticed Vicente Martinez Ybor to move his cigar manufacturing operations to Tampa. With two industries and transportation to get them to market, Tampa boomed. By 1920 the population in "The Cigar Capital of the World" was over 50,000.

As Tampa has evolved into a modern city it has been an enthusiastic participant in urban renewal. In the downtown area seldom does any block contain more than a single historic property and scores of one-of-a-kind buildings have fallen before the wrecking ball. Our hunt for Tampa's heritage will begin in a small downtown park, greenspace that was won, ironically, at the expense of two historic buildings...





**1. Lykes Gaslight Park**  
**410 North Franklin Street**



This green oasis was a welcome addition to downtown in 1995 but it came at a price - two eclectic Mediterranean 1920 buildings by go-to Tampa architect M. Leo Elliott were sacrificed. Before that the office of the Lykes Brothers stood here. In the 1870s Howell Tyson Lykes abandoned a medical career in Columbia, South Carolina, and took over a 500-acre family cattle ranch in rural Hernando County north of Tampa. Howell Lykes had seven sons and eventually the family operations would include interests in citrus groves, phosphate mining, timber harvesting, meat processing and sugarcane fields. Incorporated as Lykes Brothers in 1910, the family would become the largest landholders in Florida. Their shipping line, started in 1900 with a three-masted schooner shipping cattle to Cuba to replace herds wiped out during the Spanish-American War, became the largest in America.

**EXIT LYKES PARK TO THE SOUTH ONTO KENNEDY BOULEVARD AND TURN LEFT.**

**2. Old Tampa City Hall**  
**315 East John F. Kennedy Boulevard at Florida Avenue**



M. Leo Elliott was born in Woodstock, New York in 1886 and came to Tampa at the age of 21 to form an architectural partnership with Bayard C. Bonfoey. He would practice almost 50 years in Florida but some of his best commissions came before the age of 30, including Tampa City Hall in 1915. Elliot's eclectic design for the \$235,000 building featured a seven-story tower encased in a square three-story Neoclassical base that led some wags to call the structure "Tampa's City Hall Layer Cake." The brick tower is decorated with terra cotta details including keystones above windows and ornamental heads.

The top two stories contain the clocktower that contain Hortense the Clock; when Hortense Oppenheimer, the daughter of Tampa physician Louis Sims Oppenheimer, discovered that the town could not afford a clock for its new city hall she spearheaded a fundraising campaign that brought



in \$1,200 - close enough for the W. H. Beckwith Jewelry Company to donate the remainder for a 2,840-pound, four-faced clock.

## **TURN LEFT ON FLORIDA AVENUE.**

### **3. Sacred Heart Catholic Church Twiggs Street and Florida Avenue**



In 1859 a small frame church was raised on this site and named St. Louis Parish in honor of King Louis IX of France. By century's end St. Louis Parish stretched all the way to Key West and the little church had sprouted two wings. Ground was broken for the current sanctuary on February 16, 1898 and seven years and \$300,000 later the new church was dedicated as Sacred Heart. A century later the Romanesque-flavored building of granite and white marble stands virtually unaltered. All of the church's 70 stained glass windows were crafted in the late 1800s by Franz Mayer Co. of Munich, Germany, a going concern today.

### **4. U.S. Courthouse, Post Office, and Custom House 601 North Florida Avenue**



The first federal presence in Tampa in 1899 with the purchase of a full city block here from William B. Henderson. The full block enabled James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, to design a U-shaped building with a rear-opening for a loading dock. It also permitted generous landscape areas around Knox's Beaux Arts building that was completed in 1905.

**5. Floridan Hotel**  
**905 North Florida Avenue at Cass Street**



When the Floridan Hotel opened in 1926 it was the tallest building in Tampa and when it closed its doors as a hotel 40 years later it was still the tallest as the Franklin Exchange Building was about to usurp its title. Francis J. Kennard & Son gave the \$1.9 million structure a stately Neoclassical look apropos of Tampa's premier hotel. Through the years the Floridan guestbook included the names of Gary Cooper, James Stewart, Elvis Presley and Charlton Heston. After its days as a guest house ended the Floridan trundled on as a steadily deteriorating residence house. A recent four-year, multi-million dollar restoration has brought back the original woodwork and wrought iron to greet new hotel guests.

**TURN LEFT ON CASS STREET IN FRONT OF THE FLORIDAN. TURN LEFT ON FRANKLIN STREET.**

**6. Kress Building**  
**811 North Franklin Street**



Samuel Kress began his chain of dime stores in 1896. An art lover and collector, Kress considered his stores to be works of public art on the streetscape. His architects embraced the Art Deco movement of the late 1920s and 1930s and here G.E. McKay used the style to enhance his facade dominated by three Renaissance Revival arched bays. Many of the artful former Kress stores have dodged the wrecking ball and been re-adapted; this one, abandoned in 2007, awaits its turn.

**7. Tampa Theatre**  
**711 North Franklin Street**



The Tampa Theatre joined the ranks of America's top movie palaces in 1926, designed by renowned theater architect John Eberson. Eberson specialized in "atmospheric" interiors that transported patrons to exotic locales in the theater of the mind. For Tampa, Eberson created a Mediterranean courtyard festooned with old world statuary, flowers and gargoyles all under a ceiling painted as a nighttime sky. The Tampa Theatre followed the typical life arc of downtown theaters, rising to the an exalted position in the cultural landscape in the 1930s and 1940s and then slowly leaking customers to television and suburban malls in the 1960s to face extinction. Rather than demolition, however, involved Tampa citizens saved the theater in 1973. Today the city landmark hosts 600 events a year including concerts, classic films and special events.

**8. Franklin Exchange**  
**601 North Franklin Street**



Three of Tampa's prime movers - banker John Trice, cigar king Edward Manrara and lawyer Peter O. Knight - organized the Exchange National Bank in 1894. The bank is still in operation and so are all the permutations of its buildings since 1923. They include the Neoclassical vault at the corner of Franklin and Twiggs streets; a seven-story annex designed by founder John Trice and a 22-story tower that was the tallest building in Tampa when it was completed in 1966.

**9. Tampa Police Museum**  
**411 North Franklin Street**



For 104 years this block was the official site of executive and judicial government for Hillsborough County, Florida. The first courthouse, a log building burned by Seminole Indians in 1836, possibly stood here. Subsequent ones were built on this square in 1848, 1855 and 1891. The latter a unique red brick, silver domed building, designed by J.A. Wood, architect of H.B. Plant's famed Tampa Bay Hotel, was demolished in 1952. The distinctive blue glass paneled ten-story building was constructed for the Marine Bank. The Tampa police department, created in 1886 with six men, moved here in 1997. The building also houses a police museum.

**TURN RIGHT ON MADISON STREET, IN FRONT OF LYKES PARK.**

**10. C.W. Greene Building**  
**110 East Madison Street at Tampa Street**



This three-story, ten-bay brick warehouse is a lonely survivor of the railroad and dock structures that served Tampa's port at the turn of the 20th century. Charles W. Greene operated apothecaries in Chicago before migrating to Tampa to manufacture and sell marine hardware, automotive supplies and sporting goods in the first decades of the 1900s. Although the street level has been compromised you can look up to see the fine brickwork around the second and third floor windows and along the cornice.

**TURN LEFT ON TAMPA STREET.**

**11. Park Tower**  
**400 North Tampa Street**



Considered the first modern skyscraper in Tampa when it was constructed in 1972, the 458-foot Park Tower was 178 feet higher than any other building in the city. It reigned as Tampa's sky king until 1981. When it was originally built, it was the new home of The First National Bank of Tampa. The office tower has had a parade of tenants through the year but one that has been here since the beginning has been Lykes Brothers Corporation, founded by Tampa's wealthiest family in 1910.

**TURN RIGHT ON KENNEDY BOULEVARD.**

**12. Rivergate Tower**  
**400 North Ashley Drive at Kennedy Boulevard**



Known around town as the Beer Can Building for its cylindrical shape the Rivergate Tower is one of the tallest limestone buildings in the world. Harry Wolf's design was intended to symbolize a lighthouse on the Tampa skyline. To promote the lighthouse experience the only exterior lighting on the 31-story tower are two skyward facing lights. The building opened in 1988.

**CONTINUE ON KENNEDY BOULEVARD ACROSS THE HILLSBOROUGH RIVER.**

### **13. Lafayette Street Bridge** **John F. Kennedy Boulevard over Hillsborough River**



This main roadway was originally known as Lafayette Street and later Grand Central Avenue west of the downtown area during the 19th century and early-to-mid-20th century. The road was renamed for President John F. Kennedy in 1964 by unanimous vote of Tampa City Council following his visit to Tampa on November 18, 1963. The Presidential motorcade made use of the roadway during that visit only four days before his assassination. This is the third bridge to span the river at this site; the first was a wooden bascule (draw) bridge constructed in 1889 that replaced a ferry at this location. The 323-foot Lafayette Street Bridge was constructed in 1913 at the cost of \$250,000.

### **14. First Baptist Church** **302 West Kennedy Boulevard at Plant Avenue**



Tampa Baptists first met at the corner of Twiggs and Tampa streets in 1859. The congregation moved into this imposing Neoclassical sanctuary in 1923. The curved corner entrance is framed by a set of fluted Corinthian columns that rise to a balustraded roof. Corinthian pilasters set off the high arched windows down each facade. The classical confection is topped by a gilded dome. The Baptist facilities cover three city blocks here and include the intimate Culbreth Chapel, rendered in brick with engaged Ionic columns and wrapped in stone corner quoins.

**AT UNIVERSITY DRIVE, TURN RIGHT AND WALK ONTO THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA CAMPUS.**



## 15. Tampa Bay Hotel University Drive at West Kennedy Boulevard



Henry Bradley Plant was born in Branford, Connecticut in 1819. He passed up a chance to go to Yale University, eager to begin his working life as a deck hand on a steamboat plying the waters of the Connecticut River. One of his responsibilities was handling express parcels which he did so efficiently that he landed as a manager for the Adams Express Company. By the age of 24 Plant was in charge of the territory south of the Potomac and Ohio rivers. With the Civil War brewing on the horizon the company's directors, fearing confiscation of their properties, transferred them to Plant who organized the Southern Express Company in 1861. After the war Plant bought several ruined railroads at foreclosure sales and by 1882 he was ready to begin a push across Florida towards the prize of Tampa's deepwater harbor.

Tampa's main port was inaccessible for the larger ships of the day so Plant continued his railroad line to Port Tampa, a new town he built several miles away. Plant would build eight hotels along his line, including the Port Tampa Inn on stilts in the bay. But his prized hotel would be the Tampa Bay Hotel, which Plant sunk almost three million dollars into in 1888. The 511-room guest house covered six acres by itself and another 21 buildings were scattered around the grounds. Plant had architect John Wood design the hotel in an exotic Moorish Revival style to appeal to globe-trotting Victorian travelers of the day. When they arrived visitors would find the first elevator, finished in polished Cuban mahogany, installed in Florida and the first guest rooms to have electric lights and telephones.

Henry Plant died in 1899, and his heirs sold the facilities to the city of Tampa in 1904. The hotel closed in 1930 and has been leased to the University of Tampa since 1933. In the 1990s the main building received a meticulous restoration, including returning the hotel's six minarets, four cupolas and three domes to their original stainless steel state.

**WITH YOUR BACK TO THE TAMPA BAY HOTEL WALK OUT INTO PLANT PARK.**

## 16. Plant Park

### West Kennedy Boulevard at Hillsborough River



Henry Plant's Tampa Bay Hotel was surrounded by 150 acres of grounds, landscaped by French architect Anton Fiehe. Plant Park is the remains of those grounds and is considered Tampa's oldest park and its 4.5 acres were declared a local historic landmark in 2001. In its time the grounds featured such attractions as a golf course, a casino and a zoo. Local legend maintains that Babe Ruth hit the longest home run of his life on the baseball field located on the hotel grounds. The Sultan of Swat was a familiar guest in the hotel's latter days.

Today's park is crossed by walking paths through manicured grounds dotted with sculptures, historical cannons and exotic plantings. The 112-foot flagpole is a recreation of the original that stood here - the flag has 45 stars to reflect the number of states in 1892. A typical flagpole stands about 30 feet tall, the tallest in the United States is a Sheboygan, Wisconsin pole that reaches 400 feet.

**WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH ENJOYING PLANT PARK, MAKE YOUR WAY BACK TO KENNEDY BOULEVARD AND TURN LEFT TO RECROSS LAFAYETTE STREET BRIDGE. AS YOU CROSS THE BRIDGE, THE DOMINANT TOWER TO YOUR RIGHT IS....**

## 17. 100 North Tampa



At 579 feet and 42 stories, this is Tampa's tallest building and the ninth tallest in Florida. Opened in 1992 at the cost of \$108 million, the postmodern building designed by HKS Architects of Dallas, boast granite entrance arches that are 40 feet high. The exterior features polished Rosa Dante granite quarried in Spain and pewter tinted glass. After setbacks near the top the building peaks in gables surrounded by metal grillwork and is topped by a Gothic-style green standing seam metal roof.

**CONTINUE ON KENNEDY BOULEVARD BACK TO THE TOUR STARTING POINT IN LYKES GASLIGHT PARK.**

## IDENTIFYING AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

### *Recognizing Early American Architecture:*

#### Postmedieval English Colonial (1600-1700)

- \* steeply pitched, side-gabled roof
- \* small casement windows with many small panes (restored often)
- \* massive chimney
- \* vertical board (batten) door
- \* little or no eave overhang, no cornice detailing
- \* one room deep

#### Dutch Colonial (1625-1840)

- \* side-gambreled roof
- \* usually one story
- \* batten door, most divided into upper and lower halves
- \* little or no eave overhang

#### French Colonial (1700-1830)

- \* steeply pitched roof, either hipped or side-gabled
- \* one story
- \* tall, narrow door and window openings
- \* doors and windows typically divided vertically into pairs
- \* walls of stucco (over half-timbered frame)

#### Spanish Colonial (1660-1850)

- \* low-pitched or flat roof
- \* normally one story
- \* few small windows
- \* multiple external doors
- \* walls very thick in stucco over adobe brick or rubble stone
- \* long, narrow porches opening to courtyards

#### Georgian (1700-1780)

- \* windows with double-hung sashes, typically nine or twelve small panes per sash; windows are never in adjacent pairs
- \* paneled door, normally with decorative crown (most often pedimented but at times broken-pedimented) and supported by decorative pilasters
- \* row of small rectangular panes beneath door crown
- \* cornice usually emphasized with tooth-like dentils or other decorative molding
- \* windows typically five-ranked and symmetrically balanced with center door; less commonly three-ranked or seven-ranked

### Adamesque (Federal) (1780-1820)

- \* windows with double-hung sashes, typically six small panes per sash; windows are never in adjacent pairs
- \* semi-circular or elliptical fanlight over paneled door, typically accompanied by sidelights, elaborated crown and surround, and/or extended as small entry porch
- \* cornice usually emphasized with tooth-like dentils or other decorative molding
- \* windows typically five-ranked and symmetrically balanced with center door; less commonly three-ranked or seven-ranked
- \* while similar to Georgian, features are often “lighter”

### Greek Revival (1825-1860)

- \* gabled or hipped roof of low pitch
- \* entry porch or full-width porch supported by square or round, prominent columns
  - Doric: plain capitals
  - Ionic: capitals with scroll-like spirals
  - Corinthian: capitals shaped like inverted bells decorated with leaves
- \* narrow line of transom and sidelights around door, usually incorporated into elaborate door surround
- \* cornice lines emphasized with wide, divided band of trim

### *Recognizing Victorian Architecture:*

#### General Victorian Features (1840-1910)

- \* roof ornaments
- \* bay (protruding) windows
- \* three-part Palladian (rounded in middle) windows
- \* gingerbread porch trim

#### Gothic Revival Style (1835-1875)

- \* high-pitched center gables
- \* pointed arch windows and doors
- \* pendants and finials extending from roof

#### Italianate Style (1840-1885)

- \* brackets under roof cornices
- \* cupolas on the roof
- \* narrow, square porch posts with chamfered corners
- \* tall, slender windows

### Second Empire Style (1855-1885)

- \* mansard roof, concave or convex, with dormer windows on steep lower slope
- \* molded cornices bound lower roof slope above and below
- \* eaves normally with decorative brackets below

### Stick Style (1860-1890)

- \* stick-like bracketing on porches, often diagonal or curving
- \* stick-like grid on wall surfaces
- \* Jerkin-Head (cut-off triangular) roofs and dormers
- \* pent (or shed) roofs on dormers, porches and bays
- \* decorative trusses in gables; often steeply pitched gables
- \* wooden wall cladding (boards or shingles)

### Queen Anne Style (1880-1910)

- \* asymmetrical facade
- \* patterned shingles
- \* turned porch posts and trim
- \* corner towers and turrets
- \* wraparound porch
- \* steeply pitched, irregular roofline

### Shingle Style (1880-1900)

- \* shingled walls without interruption at corners
- \* multi-level eaves above asymmetrical facade
- \* extensive porches
- \* walls and roofs covered with continuous wood shingles

### Richardsonian Romanesque (1880-1900)

- \* based on the innovative designs of Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson
- \* round topped arches over windows, porch supports or entrance
- \* most have towers, usually round with conical roofs
- \* always masonry walls, usually with rough-faced, squared stonework
- \* facade usually asymmetrical
- \* elements grouped in sets of three

## *Recognizing 20th century Architecture:*

### Colonial Revival (1885 and beyond)

- \* accentuated front door with fanlights and sidelights
- \* symmetrical facade around centered entrance
- \* windows with double-hung sashes
- \* large dormers
- \* round, smooth porch columns, often clustered

### Neoclassical (1895-1950)

- \* facade dominated by full-length porch supported by classical columns, typically Ionic or Corinthian
- \* facade shows symmetrically balanced windows and center door
- \* revivals may have curved porticos, two-story entrances, paired or tripled windows and/or bays not seen on originals
- \* often very large

### Tudor (1890 -1940)

- \* massive chimneys, commonly crowned by decorative chimney pots
- \* facade dominated by one or more prominent cross gables, usually steeply pitched
- \* decorative half-timbering often present
- \* steeply pitched roof, usually side-gabled
- \* tall, narrow windows, commonly in multiple groups with multi-pane glazing
- \* walls of brick, stone, wood, stucco or in combination

### French Chateausque (1890-1930)

- \* busy roof line with many vertical elements (spires, pinnacles, turrets, gables, shaped chimneys)
- \* steeply pitched hipped roof
- \* multiple dormers, usually wall dormers extending through cornice line
- \* walls of masonry, usually stone

### Beaux Arts (1890-1930)

- \* wall surfaces with decorative garlands, floral patterns or shields
- \* masonry walls, usually of light-colored stone
- \* facade with corner quoins and columns, oftne paired with Ionic or Corinthian capitals
- \* first story typically rusticated (stonework) with exaggerated joints
- \* facade symmetrical



### Spanish Mission Style (1890-1930)

- \* shaped Mission dormer or roof parapet
- \* porch roofs supported by large square piers, commonly arched above
- \* commonly with red tile roof covering
- \* widely overhanging eaves, usually open
- \* wall surface usually smooth stucco

### Pueblo Revival (1910-present)

- \* flat roof with parapeted wall above
- \* stucco wall surface, usually earth-toned
- \* projecting wooden roof beams (vigas)
- \* wall and roof parapet with irregular, rounded edges
- \* unpainted wood porch columns - maybe just tree trunks
- \* tile or brick floors

### Prairie Style (1900-1920)

- \* low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves
- \* two stories with one-story porches or wings
- \* massive square porch supports
- \* detail emphasizing horizontal lines
- \* hipped roofs are more common than end or side gables
- \* one of few indigenous American styles developed by Chicago architects Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright and built only during first two decades of century

### Craftsman (1905-1930)

- \* low-pitched gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang
- \* roof rafters usually exposed
- \* porches supported by square columns
- \* decorative braces or false beams under gables
- \* columns frequently continue to ground level without a break at porch level
- \* generally one or one-and-a-half stories

### Art Deco (1920-1940)

- \* zigzags and other geometric and stylized motifs
- \* towers and other vertical projections
- \* smooth stucco wall surface
- \* decorative motifs: geometric floral; chevron with lozenge; reeding and fluting, often around doors and windows; sunrise pattern

### Art Moderne (1920-1940)

- \* streamline, curved corners
- \* smooth stucco wall surface
- \* asymmetrical facade
- \* flat roof, usually with ledge at roof line
- \* horizontal grooves, lines, balustrades
- \* windows can turn corners and can be roundly shaped
- \* glass-block windows or sections of the wall

### International (1925-present)

- \* no decorative detailing at doors or windows
- \* smooth, unornamental wall surface
- \* asymmetrical facade
- \* flat roof, usually without ledge at roof line
- \* windows usually metal casements set flush with outer walls